preclude their enjoying any great influence.

The Salars' pattern of social life follows the Islamic form. Patriarchy rules the extended family, whose members' main occupation is agricultural work. However, agriculture goes hand in hand with trade, which plays also a noticeable role. As a group, the Salars are economically unimportant since they form only a small Turkic tribe.

The Sarigh Uighurs:

The Sarigh Uighurs, the so-called Yellow Uighurs, are a small tribe of Turkic origin which is becoming extinct. Although immediate neighbors of the Chinese, they never learned agriculture, and remained herdsmen. Nowadays the Sarigh Uighurs are mostly hired shepherds of Chinese cattle owners. Frequently one also finds them as laborers on Chinese farms. An occasional Sarigh Uighur family owns a few cows, sheep, and horses. The smallest and the only social unit, is the patriarchal family.

The Shera Yögur:

The people belonging to this small Mongolian tribe, rapidly becoming extinct, are semi-nomadic herdsmen. The old Mongolian clan-system is still preserved. Clan exogamy exists and the migrational units are the single clans. The economic centers, however, are their Buddhist monasteries, for it is the monasteries who own the herds and not the individual tribesmen.

The Monguors:

Ethnically consisting of Mongols, Turks, Tibetans, and Chinese, speaking an old Mongolian and Tibetanized dialect, the Monguors are the only Mongolian tribe of the Northwest that shifted successfully from nomadic pastoralism to farming. They learned farming and the use of their agricultural tools for raising barley, wheat, peas, potatoes, etc., from the Chinese. However, livestock still plays an important role as the second inportant economic resource. While sheep, cows, mules, and pigs are economically important, horses are bred only because to own horses is a mark of prestige.

The basic social and economic unit of the Monguors is the extended family which is patrilineally and patrilocally oriented. The grandfather and great-grandfather enjoy authority over all members of the family. Property is collectively owned.

The families belong to a clan which is headed by a chieftain whose Chinese title is T'u-ssu, who is at the same time a Chinese official. Originally the clan chieftain was simply the head of a number of extended families, whose migrations he directed and whose highest duty was the military protection of the clan through organization and training of the men. Later

13 241 311 farming purposes is not great. Deserts, high mountains, and loess covered plateaux limit the expansion of further cultivation. The margin of cultivation can be extended but not without the great cost involved in reclaiming land and constructing irrigation networks. The dearth of rainfall in many sections of the Northwest and the shortness of the growing season also handicap farming. The destruction of wooded areas and gradual ruination of the top soil in the past has resulted in severe erosion and the elimination of important organic substances necessary for soil fertility.

241 433 489 [438] The absence of transport and communications has encouraged greater subsistence farming and less production for markets. The inability of the farmer to sell his surplus and obtain a profitable return so that he could increase production or practice more diversified farming, has stunted the growth of internal markets in the Northwest region. The inability of the Nationalist Government to link the internal markets of the Northwest to China Proper by a series of transport and communication systems, and provide for a free flow of capital, as well as short term low interest rate loans, has seriously retarded the development of agriculture.

241 311 [435] [433] We have seen from our data that while the above problems are quite serious, there exists no real problem of tenantry or population pressure on the land. Furthermore, given high prices for their goods, as occurred during the second world war, the farmers of the Northwest, in some instances, could by more intensive farming methods raise the level of output significantly.

241 311 433 Both T. H. Shen and J. L. Buck (agronomists) feel that if there were some restoration of fertility to the land in terms of resodding and planting root crops, and if a large portion of the hilly sections could be turned over to the raising of livestock, certain sections of the Northwest would come to have a distinct comparative advantage economically so far as the production of livestock is concerned, and greater incomes would be forthcoming to the rural inhabitants (this assumes such products could be cheaply exported and necessitates a proper balance between farming and livestock raising).

241 433 One of the most vital factors not yet mentioned, is the necessity for constructing irrigation works and to further extend those already in exisfence. This entails also the building of large reservoirs; the small magnitude of irrigation works is one of the greatest stumbling blocks to the development of areas like Sinkiang and Kansu, since most of the land there is desert.

However, to carry out the above projects which would overcome some of the obstacles to the expansion of agricultural production, it would be necessary that large capital outlays be available. Serious consideration of greatly expanding the area under cultivation might, however, lead to higher costs than any administration could bear, and in turn result in diminishing returns.

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TRADE

I. The Pre-Communist Period

Trade in the Northwest before the Communist conquest may be discussed by provinces.

A. Shensi

438 491 [496] [489] Trade between Shensi and the rest of the country was carried out mainly through the historical Great Northwest Highway, which links this province with Hankow and Tientsin on the one hand, and Kansu and Sinkiang on the other. Since 1937, the National government has undertaken to extend the Lunghai Railway to the Northwest, and before the Communists took over it had reached T'ien-shui, Kansu. In addition, the northern part of this province was closely connected with Shansi through three regional highways, and the southern part was linked with Hankow through the Han River, and with Szechwan through the Szechwan-Shensi bridle pass.

366 635 The commercial centers of this province are as follows: (1) Sian, the provincial capital, which not only commands the trade of the whole province, but also carries considerable transit trade; (2) T'ung-kuan, which is a transportation center between the three provinces of Shensi, Shansi and Honan; (3) Ank'ang, also known as Hsin-an, a commercial center of the Han River drainage area; (4) San-yuan, the commercial center of the so-called North Shensi Plain; and (5) Han-chung, also known as Nan-cheng, a trade center between Shensi and Szechwan.

439 435 *175 According to statistics of 1934, a normal year in pre-war times, the total value of imports and exports of this province, including foreign trade, amounted to 57,168,455 yüan, most of which were carried out through Tientsin and Hankow. The details are shown in the following table:

Table I: The Exports and Imports of Shensi, 1934

Description	Value (yüan)	
A. Exports:		19,087,221
raw cotton	16,250,000	
hemp	200,000	
raw silk	300,000	
wool	160,000	
fur and hide	757,221	
tung oil	900,000	
raw paints and paint oil	250,000	
fungs-in-trees	270,000	

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Sinkiang and Outer Mongolia have been re-opened for traffic. (See section Communications.) With these improvements in transportation, it is only logical to assume that trade in the Northwest must also have increased in volume.

Another important change is the increase of production of the Yümen Oil Field and the establishment of four new textile factories in Shensi (for details see section Industry). Although there is no information on the distribution of these products, it is reasonable to assume that most of them are intended for the consumption in the Northwest. If this is the case, the import of textiles and kerosene, which were two of the most important items of the imports of this region, must have been reduced.

Still another important change is the enlargement of cotton plantations in Sinkiang. It is reported that the China Cotton, Yarn and Cloth Company in Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region plans to send five thousand tons of cotton to other parts of the country in addition to ensuring an adequate supply for local consumption. On November 3, 1955, the first cargo of cotton of Sinkiang was dispatched to Shensi for its textile industry.

B. Government Control

The Communist control of trade in the Northwest is more or less the same as that in other parts of the country. The main instrument of control is the state trading companies, which are in charge of wholesale trade and, together with the various cooperatives and mobile trading units, purchase of native products from this region. According to Communist reports, the six basic commodities in Sian, i.e., food, cotton cloth, edible oil, coal, tea and salt, have been fully monopolized by the state trading companies since June 29, 1955; and all private wholesale establishments dealing with those goods have been liquidated. More than one hundred members of the "capitalist side" were sent to reform camps, and the store assistants were either employed by the state trading companies or sent back to their native places to seek other employment. In the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, the number of branches of state trading companies exceeded five hundred in 1954, about eight times as many as in 1950. They provide the people there with general merchandise, cotton cloth, oil and fats, petroleum, pharmaceuticals and stationary.

Aside from supplying goods on the wholesale level, the state trading companies have also undertaken to buy goods from this region. Among the goods bought in 1950 are: (1) wool, 23,000 catties, (2) hides, 800,000 pieces, (3) intestines, 1,270,000 pieces, (4) bristles, 280,000 catties, (5) tung oil, 4,500,000 catties, (6) medical herbs, 4,000,000 catties, (7) cotton, 800,000 piculs and (8) grain, 130,000,000 catties (cf. The Native Products of the Northwest, preface, Sian, 1951).

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and importance, political, commercial, and military, it entirely overshadows all the other towns in Shensi and Kansu, and is altogether the metropolis of the great agricultural North West, the land of loess and wheat.

Hsian is a backward place as regards the improvements of modern civilization, no macadamized roads, no electric light, no foreign carriages. Amongst other conveniences waterworks are required, as the water from most of the wells in the city is very brackish; good water could easily be brought from one of the many clear streams which emerge from the Ch'inling Shan a few miles to the south. There should be a boom in big contracts in Hsian when the railway gets there, or before.

We were too busy during our short stay to do much sight-seeing, but felt constrained to visit the Pei Lin ("forest of stone tablets") where the Nestorian Tablet now is. A large rubbing industry has sprung up (or perhaps it has existed for centuries or thousands of years) and almost every other stone has its attendant Chinese busy taking an impression. One would imagine that the more important inscriptions would get seriously damaged by this incessant rubbing, and indeed such appears to be the case. Outside is a shop where these myriad rubbings are busily sold, and their export from Shensi is quite a trade. The Chinese are, of course, great amateurs of ancient curios, inscriptions, and other historical records, and Hsian and Central Shensi is for them a happy hunting ground in this respect. It seems curious that this region has not received more attention from European scholars interested in these matters, since it contains the beginnings of everything as far as Chinese history is concerned, and the latter is hard to beat for an early start; sand-buried cities in the heart of the deserts of Central Asia are ransacked at great difficulty and expense by scholars of various nations, but it does not appear that much if any excavating has been done on the Hsian plain, which contained the capital of ancient dynasties which flourished three to four thousand years ago. The Nestorian Tablet, which dates back eleven to twelve hundred years, records the propagation of Christianity in China by Nestorian missionaries from Western Asia in those days. It is curious that this faith should have so completely disappeared, while Maho-

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CHAPTER III

FROM HSINGAN UP THE HAN VALLEY TO HANCHUNG

Hsingan and the resources of the Han valley—Hanyin—Shihch'uan—Hsihsiang—Kulupa—Catholics and Protestants—Hanchung—Northern troops in the Han valley.

HSINGAN FU is now a first class district city known as Ank'ang Hsien. It lies on the southern bank of the Han River at the head of a small but very fertile plain, where the river emerging from gorges flows for a few miles through more open country before disappearing into the mountains again. It consists of two cities, called the old and the new. The old city which is the commercial centre and contains most of the shops and general population is built right on the river from which it is protected by an embankment. A mile to the south lies the new city, a much smaller enclosure, containing residences of gentry and retired officials, Government schools, etc. The new city lies on higher ground and is said to have been built as a refuge in time of flood. The alluvial plain between the two cities is enclosed by stoutly built dykes running from the river up to the rising ground to the south. We were well housed in a Government building in the new city which forms a pleasant residential quarter as compared with the crowded streets of the old.

Hsingan is an important commercial centre and serves as a gateway into the whole basin of the upper Han, the Yangtzu's longest tributary. This upper Han basin may be likened to a miniature edition of the province of Szechuan, an extremely rich mountain region intersected by innumerable little fertile valleys and plains, with Hanchung, the administrative capital, comparable to Chengtu, Hsingan, the commercial gateway, to Chungking, and the Han with its gorges and rapids to the Yangtzu. To complete the likeness many parts of the Han basin are just as red as the famous "red basin" of Szechuan. A great variety of products are collected at Hsingan from this rich region and shipped down river to Laoho K'ou and Hankow, such as cereals, vegetable oils, fruits, nuts, varnish, wood oil, silk, tea,

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vegetable wax, cotton, hemp, hides, bristles, edible wood fungus, tobacco, indigo, paper, cane sugar, straw braid, etc., of which the most important is the wood oil[1], crushed out of the seeds of an apple-like fruit ripe in the autumn. Coal, iron, copper, gold, silver, antimony, and asbestos, and perhaps other minerals, exist in the neighbourhood. As a result the basin of the upper Han is one of the most prosperous regions in the whole of China and the population one of the wealthiest. Rice is usually cheaper even than in Szechuan. But in spite of its prosperity the region is isolated and backward as regards foreign improvements, and will probably undergo a very rapid development when tapped by a railway. It is one of the anomalies of modern China that this rich well-populated region and also the productive wheat and cotton-growing prairies of the Wei River valley should still be without railway communication, though neither are really difficult to get at.

The population of Hsingan is somewhat rough, not over friendly to foreigners, and strongly tainted with secret society influence, and compares unfavourably with that of Hanchung and the towns further up the valley, which have been populated by the more kindly Szechuanese. There is a considerable Mahomedan community of immigrants from Kansu, who as elsewhere keep very much to themselves.

The Han River is of course the main artery of communication. To Hankow downstream takes one to three weeks according to the state of the water, and the return journey upstream one to two months. Steam navigation on the upper Han seems to be out of the question owing to the shallows, shifting channels, and rapids. The worst rapids, some of which are very dangerous, lie between Yang Hsien (at the lower end of the Hanchung plain) and Hsingan.

There is good pheasant, partridge, and wild-fowl shooting to be had round Hsingan, and immediately to the south lies a very wild and sparsely-inhabited mountain region on the borders of Shensi, Hupei, and Szechuan, which is said to harbour all kinds of big game, such as deer, goat, pig, bear, leopard, and even the tiger.

[1] Wood oil is nowadays one of the most important articles of the China export trade; the trees flourish on bare stony mountain sides incapable of other cultivation, and are worth studying from the point of view of afforestation generally.

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487 Ch'a Chen is a village on the river, already in the district of Hsihsiang, which is an extended one. Here the
133 track, leaving the river, ascends a glen to the S.W., and after reaching a height of about a thousand feet above the Han runs westwards along a mountain slope, with a steep wooded range trending east and west on the left hand, and a series of spurs with intervening glens falling away to the Han on the right. Thirty-five li from Ch'a Chen the path descends some 500 feet to a village lying in the valley of a stream which issues from a gorge in the mountains to the south and flows north towards the Han, and then continuing westwards over another of the lateral ridges descends into a maze of wooded hills and gullies, leaving the mountains to the south out of sight. After two to three hours' march through these hills the trail ascends again to emerge on the top of bare downs, whence there is a fine view over Hsihsiang and the valley plain of the Muma Ho some 500 feet below. After descending into this plain, the Hsuan Ho, issuing from a gorge in the mountains to the south, is forded, and ten li further on, after rounding a low spur separating this stream from the Muma Ho and fording the latter, the district city of Hsihsiang is reached. This is a long day's march of 100 li.

361 Hsihsiang, the capital of a second class district, lies in another of the fertile valley plains of the Han basin, that of the Muma River. This valley runs from S.W. to N.E. and is here some miles broad. To the south a rocky range of mountains rises some thousands of feet above the plain towards the Szechuan border, and to the north are bare hills separating the valley from the Han. The district is one of the wealthiest in Southern Shensi, though these compare unfavourably, in spite of their apparently greater prosperity, as regards land tax receipts with many of the Wei valley districts, such as Weinan, Lint'ung, P'uch'eng, etc., owing, it is said, to much of the newly reclaimed land in the mountains not being on the old registers. A good deal of
[248 438] silk is produced. This Han valley silk is inferior to the Szechuan product, but is good enough to send to Kansu in exchange for the skins, furs, musk, deer-horns, and medicines of that province. Hsihsiang is also noted as the home of many famous literati and officials, and we were

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palatially lodged in the house of a former provincial governor.

There are at least three roads from Hsihsiang to Hanchung, *via* Yang Hsien, Ch'engku Hsien, and Kulupa respectively. We followed the latter, a three days' march. The path runs up the Muma Ho for some 15 li, where the hills close in on the river and bring the valley to an end, and then runs through the hills and along the river to the village of Matsung T'an, 50 li from Hsihsiang and, owing to a small rapid, the head of navigation for small boats on the Muma Ho, up to this point a placid stream. A little further on the trail leaves the main stream, which here flows down from the south, and turns up a small sandy tributary to the south-west, then turns west through low wooded hills intersected by rice fields, and then runs north-west up a small valley to reach the village of Shaho K'an, 25 li from Matsung T'an. This village lies, as its name implies, in a pleasant region of low sandy hills covered with small woods and intersected by rice fields much resembling Szechuan. For some reason or other it is largely a Mahomedan community with two mosques. In the woods one will often see heaps of old timber, carefully stacked, for the growth of a vegetable fungus called *mu erh* (wood ears), which is a much esteemed delicacy and forms quite an important article of commerce in the Han valley.

The next stage is from Shaho K'an to Kulupa, a distance of 70 li. The path runs up the narrow valley of the stream, occasionally cutting across the low wooded hills, for 30 li to the village of Sunchia P'ing, where the hills open out and encircle a little rice plain. The district of Ch'engku is here entered. The country is a maze of little wooded hills intersected by gullies growing rice, and its chief feature is the sand. The hills are of soft disintegrating sandstone, the stream is a trickle of water in a sandy bed, and the path a firm sand embankment between stream and rice fields. It is evidently an old sandstone plateau cut up into hills and gullies by the action of water, like so much of Szechuan. North of the Ch'inling Shan such a country would be a desert; here with the more abundant rainfall and its resultant vegetation, it is a garden. From Sunchia P'ing the trail continues westwards for a time up the stream, and then, as

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than some of the veterans of the China Inland Mission, who have passed the best part of their lives in isolated stations in Shensi and Kansu, such as Hsingan, Hanchung, Fenghsiang, Lanchou, Liangchou, Hsining, and Ninghsia, where months and years pass by without their ever seeing another foreigner. Their success in securing converts may not have been striking, but it is permissible to speculate on whether those whom they have secured are not more genuine Christians than the native Catholics. Often in spite of the basest ingratitude on the part of the Chinese, whose wounds and illnesses they tend one day, only to be passed by in the street with a scowl on the next, these noble men have laboured on year after year doing good and leavening, in however small a degree, the leaden mass of Chinese materialism. The results of their work may not always be apparent now, but they have sown a seed which cannot fail in time to produce a harvest of some kind, a harvest of which other Missions not infrequently reap the benefit.

We spent the night at Kulupa, where we were most hospitably received and entertained with a banquet.

The distance to Hanchung is called 75 li. After descending for about an hour's march through gullies in the hills the track debouches on to the famous plain of Hanchung, a highly fertile, heavily cultivated, and densely populated region, stretching for a certain distance along both banks of the Han, and entirely surrounded by mountains. Another two hours' march across this plain, past the boundary between Ch'engku and Hanchung (Nanch'eng) districts, brings one to the Han River here a shallow stream flowing in a broad sandy bed, a hundred yards wide and a few feet deep. The path runs along the banks of the Han for a short distance, and then, crossing by a ferry, continues for ten li over the plain to reach the busy township of Shihpali P'u. This village, which, as its name implies, is 18 li from Hanchung, is developing into a large town, and is evidently the centre of the through trade from Szechuan, Kansu, and Northern Shensi, which, as is usually the case in China, is driven to avoid the capital by the various tolls and dues. From here the road runs west for the rest of the way to Hanchung, passing through a rich suburb to reach the East Gate of the city.

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Hanchung, now officially known by the name of the district as Nanch'eng, is a first class Hsien, and is one of the three or four wealthiest and most populous cities in the province. It lies in the centre of the rich cigar-shaped plain of the Han valley, surrounded by mountains, and in its situation and general appearance much resembles a smaller edition of Chengtu in Szechuan. Two crops, wheat followed by rice, are regularly raised on the plain. A considerable quantity of silk is also produced and some cotton. The situation of Hanchung in the centre of the most fertile region in the province and at the point of intersection of four trade routes, south to Szechuan, west to Kansu, north to the Wei valley, and east down the Han to the coast, has made it a considerable trade centre. For the same reason it has always been one of the richest and most important likin stations in the province, where the Chinese officials, as elsewhere, do their best to throttle the transit trade and kill the goose which lays the golden eggs by the excessive imposition of dues and tolls. There are few more lucrative offices in the province than that of Superintendent of the Hanchung Likin.

Hanchung is the administrative capital of the upper Han basin, and is the seat of a Taoyin and a Chenshoushih. The position of the former is that of Civil Superintendent of the magistrates in his jurisdiction. It is nowadays less important than it was in the days of the Manchus. Since the abolition of the hierarchical system of Tao, Fu, Chou, and Hsien, the territorial administration is entirely in the hands of the district magistrates acting directly under the Civil Governor of the province. Thus the magistrates correspond directly with the Governor and send copies of their despatches and reports to the Taoyin, so that the latter is short-circuited and the abolition of the post is sometimes advocated as being superfluous. Under the old system the Hsien reported to the Chou, the Chou to the Fu, the Fu to the Tao, and the Tao to the Governor, each being responsible for the acts of his subordinate. The position of Chenshoushih is that of a General with powers of military administration. At the present time, when things are more or less unsettled and the military rule the roost, a Chenshoushih often has powers which amount practically to those of an independent

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through which the path descends to reach the township of Ch'angning Chen, winding to and fro to avoid the rifts, the heads of ravines and valleys breaking away south and south-east.

The harvest time on these immense wheat prairies which was now approaching is a period of intense activity. The crops are of course gathered entirely by hand, and large numbers of labourers from Kansu, groups of whom we were constantly meeting, come down to assist; after the harvest is over in the Wei valley plains they work back across the plateau of Western Shensi to their native highlands, harvesting as they go. In good years there must be a large surplus of wheat in Shensi and Kansu available for export; but in the absence of waterways and railways the means of communication are so bad that it would be impossible to move the harvests to any distance.

From Ch'angning the path runs in a northerly direction across the plateau, winding about to avoid the impassable rifts, for about 20 li, where it reaches the Ching River, flowing in a deep narrow cañon some 800 feet deep. There is a steep descent into this gorge, and the Ching River, an unfordable torrent of liquid mud, is crossed by a ferry. This cañon exposes clearly the depth of the loess covering, some five or six hundred feet, the stream having carved itself a bed still deeper down in the underlying rock. The track climbs out of the gorge to the top of the plateau a similar height on the further side, and then runs across the undulating uplands for 15 li to the village of Kao Ts'un in the district of Pin Chou, 90 li from Yungshou. This is a tiring march, including the passage of the Ching Ho, for on the small roads of Northern Shensi the li are apt to be very long.

From Kao Ts'un the track continues N.E. for another 30 li to the village of T'u Ch'iao (4400 feet), in the district of Sanshui, now called Hsünyi Hsien, the highest and most northerly point on the plateau reached between Yungshou and Ch'unhua, whence it runs S.E., descending gradually with the slope of the land, for 45 li, to the large village of T'ungshen Kou. So far the trail by keeping to the north had avoided the crevasses in the loess, but as soon as one turned S.E. they began to be met. Thus between T'u Ch'iao and T'ungshen Kou three streamlets flowing in

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Hsingshih Chen, a busy place where much of the commerce of P'uch'eng district is carried on. Fup'ing, another important first class district city, lies in a depression in the loess plain caused by the shallow valley of a stream which provides irrigated lands of the richest kind. We chanced to be travelling this trail at a time when political affairs were in a more than usually chaotic state and the authority of the officials more than usually relaxed, and we had been strongly advised not to follow this route owing to the alleged large and turbulent populations of P'uch'eng and Fup'ing, who are said to be noted for their independence and love of managing their own affairs (*P'u Fu jen to, pei hsing pu an*, as one member of our party kept repeating); but, as almost everywhere else on our travels, we found the people perfectly friendly.

From Fup'ing to Sanyuan should be an easy march of 60 li; but the rains had now suddenly broken and it was an arduous day ploughing through the loess mud, which has a peculiar slimy character of its own, rendering progress whether on foot or on horseback dreadfully slow. The trail runs S.W. for a few li across low-lying land, apparently the valley of the Yao Chou River, which was largely under cotton, and then continues for 20 li across a wheat-growing plateau to the boundary of the two districts. Here there is a steep drop through a loess cutting into a level plain across which the track runs for the rest of the way to Sanyuan.

Sanyuan, the centre of a second class district, is one of the largest and most important cities in the province, though this is not saying much. Commercially it is an annex to Hsian Fu, much of the commerce which really belongs to the latter being transacted here to avoid the official exactions of the provincial capital. For the same reason most of the trade to and from Kansu passes through Sanyuan. During recent years it has played an important part in the various rebellions and other political events which have so disturbed the province, and its trade has therefore been for the moment destroyed. The city lies on a level loess plain, and is bisected by a stream flowing in a deep rift, which is spanned by a fine stone bridge; the southern portion contains the shops and life of the place, the northern being mostly empty. Cart roads radiate in all directions across the plain.

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hands of Peking and the Northern Generals, when it was over; and the power of the North to retain in its hands the nominal government of the country, though it has so far proved itself incapable of subduing the South and the South West in a military sense, remains the only decisive and stable factor in the situation.

From Paoch'eng to Mien Hsien is a distance of 90 li by a good road up the Han valley plain, dotted with many prosperous hamlets and villages; at the time of our passage it was largely under cotton where the land did not permit of irrigation for rice. Fifty li out a tributary river from the north is crossed by an iron chain suspension bridge and the large village of Huangsha P'u on the banks of the Han is reached. Further on another river from the mountains to the north has to be crossed by a ford, and though it was now the rainy season, the magistrate of Mien Hsien, who was travelling with us, assured us that its passage would present no difficulties, as he had crossed it coming to meet us on the previous day. But it had been raining all day, and rivers in China are wont to increase and decrease in size with extraordinary rapidity. When we reached this particular stream we found, instead of the ford a foot deep, which we had been led to expect, a roaring torrent deeper than a man's height. A dilapidated little temple was discovered near by in which we made shift to camp for the night while waiting for the rain to stop and the waters to subside; but before darkness fell the magistrate's efforts resulted in a boat being secured, and we packed up again and started off to try and reach Mien Hsien that night. The passage of the river was a long business, but everything was got over in the end, and we continued our journey in the dark. The path seemed to run more or less along the banks of the Han, into which I nearly rode on more than one occasion, past the township of Ts'aiyuan Chen, which is a larger place than the district city and evidently a trading centre connected with the junk traffic on the river; and ten li further on the East Gate of Mien Hsien is reached, where we arrived about nine in the evening, wet through and tired out.

Mien Hsien, a second class district city, lies at the extreme western end of the cigar-shaped Hanchung plain, which extends eastwards to below Yang Hsien. The out-

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granite walls. The path runs for a short distance along the river, and then enters a belt of sand hills from which it emerges on to the river again at the village of T'ungkuan P'o, lying at the entrance to the gorges. From here to Lanchou (20 li) the road is a broad highway up the open cultivated valley of the Yellow River.

Lanchou Fu, now officially known by the name of the district, Kaolan Hsien, is by far the most attractive of the provincial capitals of China I have visited. It is built along the right bank of the Yellow River at a point where the hills close in on the river, the valley expanding into small plains to the east and west. The greyish yellow city walls and towers blending with the yellow waters of the river and the desolate yellow grey hills all around, the whole relieved by the bright green of the irrigated fields in the valley, combine to form an attractive picture which will long remain with those on whom the deserts and mountains of the North West exercise their mysterious charm. The modern iron bridge across the Yellow River, constructed a few years ago by foreign engineers, is rather an eyesore, but its great utility more than makes up for its appearance. Across this bridge, which at the time of our visit was in a very decayed state as far as the woodwork was concerned, passes an almost incessant stream of traffic, carts, ponies, mules, camels, and sometimes yak, bound eastwards for China and westwards for Turkestan. So far as I know there are only three bridges across the Yellow River, this one, and the Peking-Hankow and Tientsin-Pukou railway bridges in Honan and Shantung; which is, however, a better record than the Yangtzu can show, the latter having no bridges across its course anywhere. The walls of Lanchou are well built and kept in good repair, and the whole city has an air of compact strength, comparative cleanliness, and prosperity. It was never taken by the Mahomedans during the rebellions of the past, and it was also one of the few provincial capitals to escape being looted by soldiers or mob during the revolution of 1911 and subsequent troubles, and its shops appear rich and well stocked. Owing to its situation at the junction of the Yellow River with the highway from China to Turkestan, as well as numerous other roads leading in various directions, it is by far the most important centre in

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438 the North West after Hsian Fu, and all the trade there is in the province converges upon it. Traders from Tientsin, Szechuan, Turkestan, Mongolia, Siberia, Tibet, and even India may be met with in its streets.

132 Kansu is considered by the Chinese of other provinces to be a dreadfully bitter place (*k'u ti hen*), nothing but wild Mahomedans and no rice to speak of; but for a European it is in many ways the pick of the eighteen provinces. Lanchou lies a little under 5000 feet above sea-level, which in that latitude means a white man's climate, no mosquitoes, and the wearing of European clothing all the year round.

262 As regards food, excellent wheat flour, mutton, and milk are always obtainable, the two latter often scarce in other parts of China, and game is extraordinarily abundant in

271 many regions. I have only one complaint to make against Kansu and that is the brackish water in certain parts. At Lanchou itself there are springs of sweet water at Wuch'uan Shan, a collection of temples on the hills immediately to the south of the city, and the Yellow River water is also good after it has been allowed to stand and clear itself.

[233] Lanchou being situated near some of the best sheeps-

288 wool producing regions of Asia, and the climate being essentially a northern one, common sense indicates it as a suitable centre for a cloth-making industry. This was recognized as long ago as the days of the great General Tso, who established a cloth factory, which was subsequently modernised during the comparatively progressive and constructive era preceding the Revolution by the introduction of modern foreign machinery and several Belgian instructors. But the Revolution put an end to progress in this enterprise as in so many others, and the foreigners have now all departed, and the factory does not flourish. All the same, on my departure from Lanchou, the Governor insisted on my taking away, as mementoes of progress in Kansu, two locally manufactured blankets, made, I think, of camels' hair, which were really first-class articles, and hard to beat anywhere for warmth and good wearing utility. There ought to be a large market for native-made cloth amongst the Kokonor Tibetans and beyond, but the trade seems never to have been developed successfully. There are also other

381 so-called factories, for the manufacture of matches, soap, etc.,

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but the products are wretched. In any case all these enterprises suffer from the blight of Chinese official management. Lanchou is also at a great disadvantage in this respect owing to the immense difficulties involved in transporting foreign machinery and all kinds of foreign goods across the many hundreds of miles of intervening mountains from the coast. The foreign resident can import a case of beer, drink the contents, and then sell the bottles for more than the original cost of the beer; but this does not represent a new method of getting rich quick, as the cost of transport is likely to be greatly in excess of the value of either the beer or the bottles. There is, however, one really flourishing native industry in Lanchou, independent of foreign machinery, and that is the cultivation and manufacture of water pipe tobacco, which is exported to all parts of China.

The time of our visit to Lanchou coincided with the period of Yuan Shih-k'ai's power, and the Governor was one of the latter's Northern Generals. He was an excellent representative of the type of Northern soldier, and was universally acknowledged to be one of the best rulers Kansu has ever enjoyed. Owing to the geographical isolation of the province and the conservative nature of its Mahomedan population, the rebellion of 1916 had but little effect locally, and the Governor maintained his position after the fall and death of Yuan Shih-k'ai; and had we again visited Lanchou two years later we should have found him still ruling only under a different title. After the Revolution the Governors of provinces were styled Tutu[1]; Yuan Shih-k'ai abolished this name with its republican associations, and revived the old title of Chiangchün[2]; after the compromise which followed the rebellion and Yuan Shih-k'ai's death, the title of Governor was also compromised in true Chinese style into Tuchün[3]. The Governor was a native of Hofei Hsien in Anhui, and consequently not a few civil and military officials throughout the province at the time of our visit wrote Hofei on their cards. It is extraordinary what a number of prominent Chinese in recent years have been natives of this obscure little district in Anhui, ever since

[1] Literally "General Manager," i.e. Governor.
[2] Literally "Army Leader," i.e. Marshal.
[3] Literally "Army Manager," i.e. Military Governor.

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Many villages are passed on this stage, the largest being Ssushihli P'u and Chaochiakengtzu, 40 and 50 li out respectively. Ningyuan (new name Wushan Hsien) is a pleasant little city lying in the irrigated valley of the Wei River producing heavy crops of corn and hemp.

From Ningyuan to Fuchiang is a long stage called 100 li. The road continues down the valley, crossing a loess ridge just before getting to the large market village of Lomen Chen, 30 li out. The valley on this stretch of the road is very fertile, thickly populated, and well timbered. Fuchiang is quite a wealthy town, and this part of Kansu is probably the richest in the province, with the exception perhaps of the Ninghsia plains. It used to be a centre for the opium trade, now more or less extinct. The poppy was formerly cultivated extensively in all the irrigated areas in Kansu, and the product was considered the best native-grown opium in China and was in great demand in Peking, Tientsin, and North China generally.

At Fuchiang the road leaves the Wei valley and ascending a gorge in the loess hills, crosses a steep little pass and descends to the large village of Kuantzu Chen, 40 li out. From here it continues down this valley, that of a tributary of the Wei, passes through a stony gorge, and emerges at the village of Liushihli P'u, 60 li from Fuchiang, whence there is a good road through cultivated fields down the valley for the remaining 60 li to Ch'in Chou. The latter, now known as T'ienshui Hsien, consists of no less than five cities built one alongside the other, and is one of the largest and most important towns in the province. A considerable trade is carried on with Shensi and Szechuan, the exports consisting of the regular products of Kansu, such as wool, hides, deer's horns, furs, musk, rhubarb, mountain medicines, tobacco, and opium, and the imports of silk, tea, piece goods, etc. The Szechuanese element in the population is considerable, and the proximity of that province is in many ways noticeable. It is not a Mahomedan centre, but there is a small community of Moslem merchants engaged as usual in the horse and cattle trade and in the export of hides to Hankow. Two roads lead from here into Shensi, one *via* Hui Hsien to Hanchung, and the other *via* Ch'ingshui to Fenghsiang; two roads also lead into Szechuan, one *via*

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It is suggested that the Chinese might with advantage borrow the services of some officers from the Survey of India and proceed to the triangulation of the whole country. The results, at any rate in Kansu and parts of Shensi, would be surprising. Amongst many other interesting facts which would be brought to light are the actual heights of the snow-clad mountains on the western borders of Kansu and Szechuan, some of which probably equal or surpass all but the highest giants of the Himalayas.

Min Chou (now Min Hsien) is a small city with busy suburbs situated on the right bank of the T'ao River at the point where the latter, flowing down from the Kokonor mountains in the west, makes a sharp right-angle turn to the north. The altitude is about 7500 feet. The T'ao River valley, here nearly a mile wide in places, is very fertile, and produces wheat, barley, beans, hemp, etc. Like T'ao Chou and Hsiku, Min Chou is a centre for the Chinese trade with the Tibetan inhabitants of the Kokonor country further west. A rough cart built entirely of wood with remarkably high wheels and drawn by the half-bred yak is used round Min Chou, on the roads to T'ao Chou, on the grasslands round the latter, and in other border parts of the province. I mention this cart because it is obviously very useful and because it is quite unusual to find wheeled traffic of any kind in such mountainous country in China; its introduction into the Tibetan inhabited plateau west of Tachienlu in Szechuan would revolutionise transport in that region.

Leaving Min Chou the road runs along the right bank of the T'ao River for ten li, and then crosses to the left bank by a ferry, the bridge having been destroyed at the time of the White Wolf raid. The river is here in the summer about 80 yards wide, six to eight feet deep, and very rapid. Navigation is confined to rafts of lumber down stream. From the ferry the path continues up the valley for three to four hours' march to the village of Hsitachai. The T'ao River valley is in this neighbourhood one of the most attractive regions in Kansu, or perhaps in China, being fertile and well cultivated, and bounded on the southern side by forest-clad mountains, the foothills of the great Min Shan. The river flows much of the way in a narrow

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over the mountain slopes, and then a sudden bend of the valley reveals the gilt-roofed temples and huge barrack-like constructions of the great monastery. The buildings are, I should say, without parallel in the whole of China for magnificence, solidity, and size, and present a most startling appearance in that wild and sparsely populated region of mountains and grass-lands.

Labrang (Chinese Labalang Ssu) lies at an altitude of about 9000 feet in the valley of the Tahsia River just below the level of the grass-lands which commence immediately to the west. It is a regular town in itself containing over 3000 monks as well as a considerable floating population of visiting Tibetans, hundreds of whom were at the time of our visit encamped in the neighbourhood. The monastery is the most important religious centre between Lassa and Urga, not excluding the better known establishment of Kumbum (T'a-erh Ssu) near Hsining. It contains a university which attracts students from all parts of Tibet and Mongolia, and even Siberia. The monastic authorities exercise control over the neighbouring Tibetans and until recently over Chinese as well. Of late, however, the chief lama, a Re-incarnation (referred to as a Hutukotu by the Chinese), has fallen much under the influence of the Mahomedans of Ho Chou, and the monks are no longer as unruly and hostile to foreigners as formerly; at the time of our visit they had even applied for the establishment of an agency of the Chinese Post Office at Labrang. All the same it is advisable for foreign visitors to be provided with an introduction from some Tibetan or Mahomedan authority. A li or two from the monastery is the usual Chinese, or rather Mahomedan, bazaar. These large monasteries on the Kokonor border are commercial as well as religious centres, and the Chinese trading villages attached to them resemble in a way the foreign settlements attached to Chinese cities opened to foreign trade. This border trade is almost entirely in the hands of the Mahomedans, and even where the Chinese take a hand in it, it is through the agency of Mahomedan middlemen, called *Hsiehchia*, who travel amongst the Tibetans further west, and barter Chinese wares for their produce, especially wool. There are many queer tales about Labrang to be heard locally.

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devils, and the circumambulation of the monastery by the figure of the coming Buddha seated in a car drawn by an elephant, in this case a mock one. The extent of Asia covered by that curious form of Buddhism known as Tibetan Lamaism is very large, stretching as it does from the northern frontiers of India to the southern borders of Siberia, and from Ladak to the confines of Manchuria.

Kueihua Ch'eng is another busy commercial town serving a hinterland extending to Kashgar, Kobdo, Ili, and Uliassutai. Near by lies the old Manchu garrison fortress of Suiyuan, which gives its name to the new territory of Suiyuan; the latter includes parts of Inner Mongolia and Northern Shansi, and has its counterpart further east in the territory of Chahar, comprising portions of Eastern Inner Mongolia and the Kalgan and Jehol regions of Chihli. These territories are administered on military lines. Kueihua is a good starting-point for a big-game shooting trip into the mountains further north, where remarkably fine sheep, a sort of *Ovis argali*, and wapiti can be secured, as well as the roe-deer and goral common in North China. With the Kalgan railway extension pushing on towards Kueihua, this is some of the best and most accessible big game ground in China nowadays.

We changed our carts at Kueihua Ch'eng and hired new ones to take us through the mountains to railhead at Feng Chen, distant four long marches. The first stage is a march of 90 li to the mountain village of Shihjen Wan, the trail continuing east across the plain for six or seven hours and then running up a shallow valley for the rest of the way. Many of the higher mountain slopes were snow-clad, though the season of the year was only late September. On the following day another long march of 90 li up a valley and over a low pass brought us to the hamlet of Wuli Pa, lying on a sort of plateau of moorland country, the beginning of the grass lands of Eastern Inner Mongolia. It snowed heavily most of the day and we arrived cold, wet, and tired to find the roughest of accommodation in a large cart inn. The third stage is still longer, called 110 li, to the village of T'ienchʻeng Ts'un, but the trail lying partly across grass country one can travel fast. The road descends through flat open valleys to a lake, where good wild-fowl shooting

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distant. We made a détour to visit this, and questioned a band of workmen we found on its border, raking the white crust into glittering mounds. They informed us that every year, in the month of April, the water wells up to its highest level, gradually retreating during the summer, and leaving behind the crystals, which are so clean and pure as to require no further process than that of being exposed to the sun's rays. Strange to say, however, the spring of drinking-water used by the villagers is perfectly sweet.

The inhabitants of Salt Lake village possess the right to a certain tax on every cartload of salt exported, but as usual opium has killed all initiative, and these unhappy people are reduced to an abject state of poverty. The miserable houses, however, are constructed of very endurable material, the blocks being of sun-dried, bituminous clay dug from the borders of the lake, and which are much harder than the kiln-burnt bricks commonly used in Kansu.

It had been reported to us that a Christian Chinese couple resided here, the husband being the official recently appointed by the Chinese Government to receive the salt tax. This lady and gentleman hearing we were there, invited us to their house and we were cordially welcomed into a delightful Christian home. It was indeed pleasant to sit down at a well-served table, and to enjoy once again Christian fellowship and intercourse. These refined people were living under conditions of the utmost isolation, where all food-supplies had to be brought from Kaotai, as it is impossible to grow any grain or vegetables; indeed, the neighbourhood produces no commodity of any description whatever except salt.

And now at length we finally touched the extreme southern border of our objective, and passed, without